

Inspection of University of Worcester

Inspection dates: 16 to 19 May 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

The University of Worcester (UW) gained degree-awarding powers in 1997, followed by full university status in 2005. The university started to offer apprenticeships in May 2018. At the time of the inspection, 68 apprentices were studying the level 5 nursing associate apprenticeship. Nine apprentices were enrolled on the level 7 advanced clinical practitioner apprenticeship. The vast majority of the university's apprentices work within four regional hospitals. All apprentices are aged 19 and above. The provider does not work with any subcontractors.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Apprentices enjoy a wide range of placement opportunities. They complete alternative 'spoke' placement weeks in different clinical settings. This supports apprentices to routinely apply theory to practice across a range of settings, such as specialist mental health units. Apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Apprentices demonstrate high levels of respect for staff, peers and colleagues at work, contributing well to a positive workplace culture. Apprentices appreciate the opportunities to work with their peers during lessons to share experiences from their different workplaces. This supports apprentices to make progress over time.

Apprentices feel safe when they study. They know how to report any concerns they may have. Apprentices benefit from the guidance and support of personal academic tutors. Apprentices are confident to discuss with tutors any challenges they are facing in their wider lives.

Apprentices enjoy their learning. They understand clearly how completing an apprenticeship can support their career aspirations. Apprentices are ambitious to achieve well on their apprenticeship. Many apprentices are retraining to advance their career in the health sector.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have a clear focus for their apprenticeship provision. They offer apprenticeships in healthcare, which directly responds to local, regional and national priorities.

The curriculum is planned effectively in consultation with a range of stakeholders, including employers and professional bodies. Leaders work with an 'impact' stakeholder group. Representatives in this group have extensive experience of accessing a range of medical services. This group routinely contributes to the curriculum design and shares experiences of what it is like to receive medical care in specific settings. Apprentices benefit from a curriculum that prepares them well for their next steps.

Leaders and tutors plan the curriculum in a logical way. Apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours incrementally over time. Tutors teach apprentices key clinical skills, such as inserting a canula and recording a patient's blood pressure. Tutors then challenge apprentices to apply this new learning into a full medical assessment of a patient displaying a range of symptoms, which they competently complete.

Leaders and tutors take robust steps to identify apprentices' starting points. Apprentices undertake an initial needs assessment at the beginning of their

apprenticeship. This explores apprentices' existing knowledge, skills and behaviours. Tutors hold detailed discussions with apprentices, particularly where they have experience of working in the healthcare sector. Tutors consider carefully what apprentices already know and need to know to plan learning sensibly.

Tutors have high levels of subject expertise. All tutors have a wealth of clinical experiences. Tutors use this expertise to share new content with apprentices clearly. They routinely use case studies in their teaching, such as sharing experiences on making decisions about a patient's capacity to make informed decisions in line with the Mental Capacity Act. This supports apprentices' knowledge acquisition, which they apply at work.

Leaders have invested significantly in high-quality resources to support the increase in apprentices accessing provision within the healthcare sector. Apprentices access training suites equipped with a range of programmable mannequin devices that can be configured to simulate patients with a varying range of medical needs. Apprentices develop their professional practice as a result.

In most cases, tutors provide opportunities for apprentices to develop their English and mathematical skills. Apprentices on the level 5 nursing associate apprenticeship access useful software relating to safe administration of medications. Apprentices improve their skills in identifying correct quantities and amounts of medication. However, apprentices on the level 7 advanced clinical practitioner apprenticeship are not routinely supported to develop their mathematical skills.

In most cases, tutors provide apprentices with useful and timely feedback on their work. Apprentices routinely discuss with tutors their ideas for assignments. Tutors encourage apprentices to use correct scientific language when talking about medical conditions. Apprentices use the feedback from tutors to improve the quality of their work. However, in a few cases, tutors' feedback on apprentices' work is not always clear and precise. Where this is the case, apprentices do not know how to improve the quality of their work.

Leaders and tutors provide helpful and appropriate support for apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Apprentices value the additional time they receive to complete assignments. Leaders liaise with the university's wider services to put reasonable adjustments in place, where needed. Apprentices with SEND feel well supported by their tutors.

Apprentices develop a secure understanding of fundamental British values. Leaders plan opportunities for apprentices to debate and discuss such topics within the curriculum. For example, they debate choices in end-of-life care and patient consent in choosing treatment options. As a result, apprentices understand how fundamental British values and the values of their profession can relate to their own lives.

Most apprentices have a clear understanding of their next steps. On the level 5 nursing associate apprenticeship, apprentices are aware of professional registration and how they can move on to higher-level degree study. However, leaders do not

ensure that apprentices receive high-quality careers advice early enough in their apprenticeship. A minority of apprentices do not have a secure understanding of the broader range of career opportunities and next steps available to them.

Senior leaders have established robust quality improvement procedures. They accurately identify those courses where the quality of provision is not in line with leaders' expectations. Leaders quickly put into place a set of well-considered actions to raise standards and bring about improvement. However, leaders do not always track progress against improvement actions quickly enough to support timely improvements in the quality of provision.

Governors contribute well and have a clear vision for the future of the institution. They are strong advocates of widening participation and contributing to regional education and skills. Governors are well qualified and contribute positively to the university through their broad range of sector expertise. The board ensures that the views of students are appropriately considered in its decision making.

Leaders and managers use performance management well. They appraise tutors' performance by using a wide range of indicators. Leaders use this information to carefully inform training and development for staff. Where tutors are new to a teaching role, leaders provide extensive support to help tutors improve their craft of teaching, including the completion of teaching qualifications.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders give safeguarding a high priority. Designated safeguarding leads undertake appropriate training. A clear safeguarding policy is in place, including a process for reporting any safeguarding concerns. Leaders have developed useful relationships with local 'Prevent' duty coordinators. Leaders use this information to improve apprentices' understanding of local risks, such as county lines. Leaders have a clear approach to safer recruitment. They undertake necessary pre-employment checks on new staff. Apprentices have access to a range of services to support their well-being. The university has a 'Firstpoint' service, which provides support to apprentices on matters relating to topics such as finance.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that apprentices receive timely and precise feedback on their work so that apprentices know clearly what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.
- Leaders should ensure that all apprentices benefit from high-quality careers advice and guidance from the beginning of their apprenticeship so that apprentices know clearly the full range of next steps available to them on completion of their apprenticeship.

- Leaders should ensure that apprentices completing the level 7 advanced clinical practitioner apprenticeship are supported to improve their mathematical skills. This will support apprentices to be better prepared for their next steps.
- Leaders should ensure that the actions they set to support improvements are routinely tracked and monitored against clear targets to support timely improvements to the quality of provision.

Provider details

Unique reference number	133911
Address	Henwick Grove Worcester Worcestershire WR2 6AJ
Contact number	01905855000
Website	https://www.worcester.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Professor David Green CBE
Provider type	Higher Education Institution
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of apprenticeships and employer engagement, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Ian Higgins, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Helen Morgan	His Majesty's Inspector
Victor Reid	His Majesty's Inspector
Mark Parton	His Majesty's Inspector
Jiayun Pang	Ofsted Inspector
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